



**GARFIELD COUNTY
EXTENSION**

Master Gardener News

Garfield County OSU Extension Center, 316 E. Oxford, Enid, OK 73701 580-237-1228

JANUARY 2025

Next Meeting Date – January 14, 2025

Executive Meeting: 8:30 a.m.

General Meeting: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Garfield County OSU Extension

Message from Janet Coontz Garfield County Master Gardener President

Happy New Year!!! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and enjoyed time with family and friends. Beginning a new year is always fun with new ideas and plans and everything seems possible. I get excited in January because gardening season is just a few months away. You will find me flipping through those garden catalogs and searching for new ideas to try in the garden. Sure helps to pass those cold days of winter. We are making new plans for our Master Gardener year also. I would like us to focus on three words this year. They are **OUTREACH, EDUCATION** and **SERVICE**. We will be discussing these at our January meeting and how to put them into action. Please come on the 14th with some ideas to share on ways to implement them.

We had a good turnout for our Christmas dinner and missed those who could not attend. We had a great time and enjoyed some very good food and fellowship. Looking forward to seeing you all in January as we kick off another year!

Oklahoma's Proven Best

Beautiful, luscious and vibrant. Strong, steady and vigorous. From the Oklahoma Panhandle to the Ouachita Mountains in southeast Oklahoma, a plethora of plant species cover the countryside.

However, some varieties are "proven" to be the best through the Oklahoma Proven program.

Oklahoma Proven is an Oklahoma State University Extension program coordinated through the OSU Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture.

What started as a plant introduction program has transformed into what Oklahomans now recognize as an education and marketing platform for plant species across the state, said Lou Anella, horticulture and landscape architecture professor and director of The Botanic Garden at OSU.

Anella started the program in 1999. Now, Oklahoma Proven has developed into a consumer education program.

"We are trying to recommend plants that are 'proven' to do well in Oklahoma," Anella said. "The idea is that we are recommending plants we have already grown, we are already familiar with, and we feel have a proven track record."

Throughout the course of 25 years, the program has grown into a life of its own, Anella said. He has seen OSU Extension educators, nurseries and homeowners' associations share the knowledge of the program through news articles and posters, promoting the Oklahoma Proven plants and the program throughout the state.

David Hillock, OSU Extension specialist for the Consumer Horticulture and Master Gardener program, acts as a marketing coordinator for the Oklahoma Proven program.

"We have trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials we try to introduce each year and occasionally add to the collector's choice category," Hillock said.

Hillock directs a committee of members who decide if a plant should be Oklahoma Proven. The committee consists of horticulture educators, professionals and those in the green industry, which includes retailer and commercial businesses as well as consumers, Hillock said.

Mike Schnelle, professor and OSU Extension ornamental/floriculture specialist, works as a liaison between OSU and people in the green industry.

"My role is to be out in the industry working with growers and retailers, talking with them about what plants they would like to see being promoted through the program," Schnelle said.

When thinking of people in the industry, Schnelle said he receives input from a diverse group of allied professionals in Oklahoma to bring different perspectives to the committee.

"The idea is to get information from all the plant people from across the state," Hillock said, "asking 'What do you think is great?' and 'What is a good plant for Oklahoma?'"

Part of the committee's goal is to help give the public greater choices of their plant materials by introducing underuti-

lized species that do well in Oklahoma, Hillock said.

"The criteria to become Oklahoma Proven is the plants have to do well in Oklahoma with very few problems, be relatively pest free, and should not be invasive," Hillock said.

The committee members try their best to ensure the plants selected can be grown statewide, Hillock said. However, with Oklahoma being vastly different in all four corners, that can be difficult, he said.

"We always go out of our way to promote Oklahoma natives as often as we can," Schnelle said. "When we do promote adapted non-natives, we are prepared to defend why they are still very important."

The committee announces the plants for the upcoming year each fall season, Hillock said. The plants chosen for 2024 were announced at green industry conferences throughout the state and then published to the Oklahoma Proven website for the public to view.

Schnelle said he reminds consumers at conferences and workshops why the plants are worthy to be considered Oklahoma Proven and why a plant should be used more than it already is.

"For the people who are in the industry, the bottom line is profit and environmental stewardship," Schnelle said. "For the people outside of the industry, it is not just the beauty that we are looking at. I can tell them the benefits of the proven plants."

Since the beginning of the program, Anella, Hillock and Schnelle have educated people inside and outside the classroom about which plant varieties are right for them.

"If you put the right plant in the right place, you will have success," Anella said.

In honor of the 25th anniversary of the Oklahoma Proven program, Justin Quetone Moss, professor and department head for horticulture and landscape architecture, and the program coordinators curated an idea to modernize and improve the program.

They developed an online fact sheet titled "Oklahoma Proven: Plant Selections for Oklahoma," highlighting some of the best plants for Oklahoma.

The program is only advancing from here, Moss said.

Moss, Hillock, Schnelle and other program coordinators are working together to create a mobile application for the Oklahoma Proven program called "Plant-It OK."

"The application will be easier for consumers to see the list of Oklahoma Proven plants and overall will be more user-friendly," Moss said.

Hillock said the mobile app can be used as a landscape platform for users to see what plants will look best in their gardens.

"The impetus behind Oklahoma Proven is to help the growers be competitive and even more profitable by selling the

plants," Schnelle said. "But, also the program gives the consumers the best of the best, not only for the beauty and aesthetics, but also for all of the aforementioned of the plants."

The next time you cruise down a highway in Oklahoma, walk on OSU's campus, or visit your local plant nursery, keep your eye out for what might be considered Oklahoma's best — an Oklahoma Proven plant.

For more information regarding the Oklahoma Proven program, visit extension.okstate.edu/programs/oklahoma-proven/.

**The Garfield County OSU Extension
will be closed**

**January 20, 2025
for Martin Luther King Day**

*Happy
Birthday*

*Susie Skaggs-January 4
Pam Denker-January 8
Liz Breitenkamp- January 16
Linda Severin-January 18
Pam Lyon-January 27
Sheryl Bolenbaugh-January 30*

This newsletter is published monthly by the Garfield County OSU Extension Center and is one way of communicating educational information. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied.

Rick Nelson, CED

Rick Nelson
CED, Extension Educator, Agriculture/4-H

Oklahoma State University, as an equal opportunity employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination and affirmative action. Oklahoma State University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all individuals and does not discriminate based on race, religion, age, sex, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, or veteran status with regard to employment, educational programs and activities, and/or admissions. For more information, visit <https://eeo.okstate.edu>.

"Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact Rick Nelson at (580) 237-1228 or rick.nelson@okstate.edu at least two weeks prior to the event."